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MINUTES-1998-99 CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING #13

May 12, 1999; 8:00 a.m.; Behmler Conference Room

Present: Cerar, Farrell, Frenier, Haugen, Kissock, Korth, Lee, Leroux, McIntosh, Neuharth, Taylor, Woll

Guest(s): Karen Johnson, Roger McCannon, Mooney

Absent: Busch, Thielke, Utoft

[In these minutes: Political science curriculum change proposals, GenEdWeb report]

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Korth asked for corrections or additions to the previous minutes. There were none.

MOTION (Kissock, Understood) To approve the minutes of the 4/14/99 Curriculum Committee meeting.

VOTE: Unanimous in favor (10-0-0)

POLITICAL SCIENCE CURRICULUM CHANGES: Korth referred CC members to the Forms A, B, and C for the political science discipline. He understood that the requirements for the major were being changed and that Pol 3101 was being added. He asked if Pol 2101 was also being deleted. Lee said that it was. Korth noted that the phrase "within political science" should be deleted from the second sentence of the requirements for the major since mathematics courses were being added and the phrase was no longer accurate. Lee agreed.

Korth asked if there were other questions regarding the political science curriculum proposal. There were none.

MOTION (Understood) To approve the changes to the political science major requirements, the addition of Pol 3101-Political Science Analysis and the deletion of Pol 2101-Introduction to Political Science Analysis.

VOTE: Unanimous in favor (10-0-0)

GENEDWEB REPORT: Korth indicated that McCannon and Johnson were present at the meeting to respond to questions about the GenEdWeb (General Education for the Liberal Arts Online) Evaluative Report dated March 22, 1999. He asked if McCannon or Johnson had any introductory remarks.

McCannon said he trusted that CC members had had time to read the report which was sent out with the agenda. He said Johnson has supplied operations and liaison for the program. Kissock is serving as a contact on the steering committee, along with Bowers and McRoberts. When the GenEdWeb program was created, it was thought that an evaluation should be done in a couple of years. We now have two years of experience with the GenEdWeb program. There are issues related to services, marketing, and finances which should be addressed. He is gratified that faculty have experimented with creating courses for the program.

[Farrell arrived at the meeting at this point.]

McCannon noted that Interim Chancellor Schuman continues to view GenEdWeb in a positive way. In a meeting of Division Chairs (Korth was not at that meeting), it was clear that they also continue to support the program. Some faculty are leaving the program because they are leaving UMM (Buckman and Rosch) and so UC will need to find

replacement faculty. McCannon has met with the Consultative Committee and will meet next week with the Campus Resources and Planning Committee. McCannon asked for reactions to the recommendations on page 7 of the report.

Frenier asked if they had found someone to teach College Writing. McCannon said no. They are searching for someone as this has been one of the more popular GenEdWeb courses. McCannon met with the Division Chairs to see if there are other faculty he should approach about teaching in the GenEdWeb program. Frenier wondered about approaching retired faculty members. McCannon said there is no policy against using retired faculty. However, the Consultative Committee asked that only full-time faculty be involved in the program.

Korth wondered how they envisioned it working when one faculty member leaves the program and another needs to teach the same course. Does the material developed for the course belong to the faculty member? McCannon said that is one of the issues surrounding online courses. Morris UC is following all-University policy that is being developed as time goes along. Chris Maziar, Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School, has reformulated the policy in the past year. According to the draft policy, course materials belong to the faculty member. This policy has not yet been approved by the Regents. The institution owns the web site, but the course materials belong to the faculty member.

Lee commented that, when the program was launched, the assumption was made that UMM needed to "hop on the gravy train." One of the goals should be to make the GenEdWeb program self supporting. We need a new approach to marketing and clientele analysis. Our concern is whether regular course funds might be diverted to teach GenEdWeb courses. Outside funding for the program is dwindling.

Kissock said one of the lessons already learned is that GenEdWeb must offer courses that students want to take. Working with Rod Oto, Director of Admissions and Financial Aid, he sees students taking advanced placement courses. Two students in Kissock's GenEdWeb course are planning to come to UMM. Frenier noted from the report that all of the successful courses have been at the 1000 level. The 3000-level course did not make it. McCannon said the program was designed to offer general education courses which are usually at the introductory level.

Leroux wondered if there were student evaluations of the GenEdWeb courses. He was especially interested in the evaluations from high school students. McCannon said they have data on completion ratios and grade distributions. Johnson added that not many of the student evaluation forms were returned. A lot of students were appreciative of the opportunity to take the courses online. Several desired increased interaction. Frenier wondered how UC intended to address those issues. Johnson said UC lets faculty conduct the courses in whatever way they think is most appropriate. There are all sorts of options for online interaction available to faculty, including real time chats, distribution lists, etc. Full-time faculty have a lot of demands on their time and that is one of the obstacles to more interaction.

Kissock noted that one of the principles for GenEdWeb has been to limit class size to 20 students. Other institutions will let class size for online courses go up into several hundred students. Johnson said it is up to faculty if they want to let in additional students.

Leroux asked if the desire for interaction was for human face-to-face contact. Also, was the desire for more interaction from the same people who expressed appreciation for the opportunity to take online courses? Johnson said that nontraditional students are in the same classes as high school students. There are differences in the way the two groups approach the class. Students need to be technologically and academically prepared to do a class online. Leroux wondered if "interaction" included guidance from the instructor. Johnson thought there was some desire for more guidance.

McCannon noted that the completion rate for GenEdWeb classes is 81% overall. That is high compared to correspondence courses which nationally average a 30-40% completion rate. Johnson said there are contact people for students. We lose the people when they don't reach out. But that is also true for traditionally taught courses. Students in regular classes do not always complete the courses either. Actually, it is extraordinary that high school students are able to complete courses this way. Digitized videos and other means can be used to "see" the faculty member for the class.

McIntosh was concerned about the class size. A class size of 20 is too small. The average class size at UMM needs to be 27. The on-campus version of one of the GenEdWeb courses is limited to 75 students. Are we taking resources away

from the on-campus program? McCannon said the normal approach for offering GenEdWeb courses is to have faculty teach them on an overload basis and pay the faculty extra to do it. Faculty have the prerogative to use their free time as they wish, just as they would if offering an evening class. McIntosh said it is different because UMM students are excluded from taking the GenEdWeb courses. McCannon said some UMM students want to take the GenEdWeb courses. Which way do we want it? We were advised to target students at a distance from the campus. Farrell said the GenEdWeb courses are different from the regular versions of the course. A lot more work is involved for the faculty member. Johnson said that traditional students are not interested in taking classes online. They prefer to be in the classroom.

Farrell noted that it would be difficult to make the GenEdWeb program self supporting because of the small number of courses offered. Kissock thought a blurring was occurring because on-campus courses are beginning to use the same technological tools as the online courses. Faculty have enriched their on-campus coursework with the web, etc. It is hard to determine where to draw the line for what defines an online course.

Korth thought the distinction needed to be clear from the objectives. He is concerned about a shifting of objectives for the GenEdWeb program. The appearance is that the program has failed to meet its objectives to reach a certain group of students. Now it seems that the objectives might shift to allow the program to continue. Several people share this concern. Johnson said the market is hard to define at this point. The Minnesota Virtual University will have a web site beginning this summer and thousands of online courses will be listed there from various institutions throughout Minnesota. It will be interesting to see how that web site affects enrollments in GenEdWeb.

Leroux thought that nontraditional students may not be the right target group for general education courses. High school students wanting to get a head start on college might want general education while nontraditional students might be looking for something different. Johnson noted that the Minnesota transfer curriculum applies to everyone. Frenier commented that high school students might be more comfortable with the technology than nontraditional students. Johnson said that high school students have the credits paid for by the State. If a high school student is too far away from a college to attend courses as a PSEO student, then they are attracted to online college courses. Neuharth noted that the tuition revenue dropped for GenEdWeb the second year of operation. Is that because of the PSEO students? Johnson said the State reimburses UMM for the tuition of PSEO students. The State pays for both tuition and books for high school students.

Kissock said he wanted to challenge some of the premises Korth had put forth earlier. He feels that the objectives of GenEdWeb have stayed the same, namely, to offer quality undergraduate experiences to students who cannot come to campus for them. What has changed is that we have not been able to offer all ten courses to complete the transfer curriculum.

Leroux wondered if the University has a policy on residency. Kissock said he is concerned when a transfer student from a Bible college is able to transfer to UMM all of the credits necessary to complete the entire general education requirements. Issues involving transfer of credits comes from other areas as well. Korth said he is concerned about other students coming in with PSEO credits. Where did they get those credits? It could have been from a course taught in the high school by a high school teacher. As long as an accredited institution is behind the course, we have to accept it.

McCannon said they had expected GenEdWeb to be a 3-5 year experiment. At the beginning, there was a lot of interest from within the University, including President Yudof and Ann Hill Duin. During the recent Technology Fair at UMM, Duin reiterated the fact that the University wants to continue to be involved with virtual learning. It is to our advantage to be "on the train" rather than be left behind. Duin said our program could fit in with other UM programs, like General College or Rochester. She encouraged us to stay in the program. Korth wondered if she had her checkbook handy. McCannon said Duin was asked about funding and said she would know more after the legislative session was over.

Lee commented that competition is so keen. He didn't know how we could expand our market. Maybe Radio Europe? Frenier thought Radio South Dakota was a more likely prospect. Johnson said most institutions are doing upper level courses while UMM is doing introductory level courses. Korth said the question of why we should be on this train is still there. Where is this going? Kissock thought the people who started UMM 40 years ago probably had the same question. So far it is having a positive impact on the campus by keeping us aware of changes. We don't know where it is

taking us. Kissock said he has personally learned a lot through the GenEdWeb program. Leroux thought it was probably a positive experience for the faculty involved. He wanted to keep that issue in mind. There are benefits to students and benefits to faculty which are related but different.

Johnson said she should like to hear from the students on the CC. Woll didn't see a need to open GenEdWeb courses to traditional students on campus. It is better to take those courses on campus and get the advantages of the technological tools within the on-campus courses. Cerar agreed that it is best to be an on-campus student. GenEdWeb courses need not be opened up to on-campus students. Taylor said, as of yet, he had not had the desire to take any of the GenEdWeb courses that were being offered, but believes that any student at UMM should be allowed to take GenEdWeb undergraduate level courses. If courses are not equivalent but appear to be equivalent on the transcript, that makes him nervous. Why are on-campus students not allowed to take GenEdWeb courses? Because they are not equivalent? Kissock gave an example of the drug education requirement in teacher education programs. The Health Department is offering a 5000-level course through CDs and the web. A UMM student could take that online course instead of the on-campus offering and that would allow the student to do other things on campus. Taylor said he would like to have online upper level course options that are not available at Morris.

Korth said the meeting had to end at this point. Should we continue the discussion at the final meeting for the year? No clear consensus was reached.

Meeting adjourned 8:50 a.m.
Submitted by Nancy Mooney